



Supersystems

Why pay thousands of pounds for cutting-edge technology when you can get a £799 supersystem that will edit videos and play the latest games for a fraction of the price? These nine PCs can do it all – and don't cost the earth

The huge range of specifications and prices confronting computer buyers can make it hard to know where to start looking. Do you need a dual-core Pentium 4 processor, or will a budget AMD Sempron do? Do you want the latest nVidia GeForce FX 7800GTX graphics card, or would an integrated graphics chip fit your needs? For most people the truth lies somewhere in between.

Buying an expensive PC system for thousands of pounds may guarantee the latest technology, but only for a couple of weeks. At the other end of the scale, the cheapest PCs are often slow to use and difficult to upgrade. By avoiding the cheapest systems and spending a little more, you can buy a powerful PC with components that will keep you running the latest software for years to come.

This month we've tested nine computers that cost just £680 excluding VAT. All nine use the latest Socket 939 AMD Athlon 64 processors and

IN THIS REVIEW

Aria Arianet A64 3000S
Carrera Vision 6600CS-11
CCL FX30-GTVI
Evesham Axis 64 GT
Gladiator Jupiter 6600GT
Mesh Matrix Eclipse CS Xtra
NetHighStreet Net CS 799 Family
PC Nextday Zoostorm 6609
Watford Aries Performa 9221

graphics cards that connect using the new PCI Express standard. They're all capable of charging through internet and office tasks, and most are ready to take on more advanced applications too. Our reviews will help you find a PC that's powerful and perfectly priced.



CHOOSING A... £799 SUPERSYSTEM

In order to get a decent PC that does everything you want it to do for £799, you need to prioritise. Our guide will make it easy to decide what's relevant for you

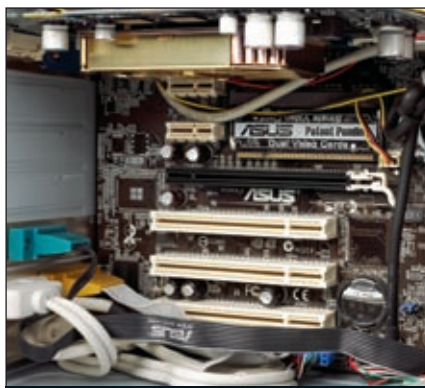
Even when you've decided on your budget, buying a PC can be difficult. Different manufacturers allocate funds differently, so identically priced PCs can have varied strengths and weaknesses. Manufacturers also work with different profit margins, so our reviews show you which PCs give you the most power and parts for your money.

Before opening your wallet, it's important to think about how your new computer will be used. With this in mind, you'll be able to pick a system with strengths that tie in with your interests, and whose weaknesses, if any, are unimportant to you. If you want to edit video files, look for a PC that scores highly in the *Computer Shopper* application benchmarks on page 167. If you want to play games, focus on the systems that perform best in our Doom 3 test. For a PC suitable for general use, look for one with decent scores in both tests.

Don't be blinded by performance and specifications, though. The internal power of a computer is only useful if it's easy and comfortable to use, so a well-made display, keyboard and mouse are also very important. Some manufacturers also throw in extras such as a multifunction peripheral (a combined printer and scanner) or TV card with their PC. Unless you know that these will be very useful to you, don't let them sway your decision too much; it's easier to add a peripheral item to your PC in future than it is to add more speed.

POWER RANGES

Even the slowest system in our round-up can cope comfortably with tasks such as sending email, surfing the web and writing office documents. If you want to take on more demanding tasks such as image editing, video production or gaming, though,



An SLI-enabled motherboard gives you a cost-effective graphics upgrade. If one GeForce card has been installed, you can add an identical card later to boost performance

you should pay careful attention to our benchmark results and the specifications of each PC.

To work with video and photos you'll need a powerful processor and plenty of memory. The fastest PCs on test have an Athlon 64 3500+ processor and 1GB of memory, which makes them ideal for fine-tuning digital photos or editing a video. For both jobs you need plenty of storage space, so look for 200GB of hard disk space.

If your main focus is 3D gaming, look for a powerful 3D graphics card. The best systems in this group use either nVidia's 6600GT chipset or ATI's X800 and X800GT. They are all capable of running the latest games with plenty of detail at a high frame rate. Gladiator's Jupiter 6600GT has an added advantage as its single 6600GT graphics card is fitted into a motherboard that can accept a second, identical, card later. By adding this second card you will be able to boost your 3D power more cheaply than by replacing it.

Three PCs are less suited to gaming. NetHighStreet's system has a very slow graphics card and struggled in our tests. Carrera's Vision 6600CS-11 is twice as fast as the NetHighStreet PC but still a little sluggish. Watford's Aries Performa 9221 is similar, but its graphics card is silent, making it a good choice if you find computer noise particularly irritating.

THE BIG SCREEN

Four of the systems this month come with 19" LCDs. With a matching native resolution, these show the same amount of detail as a 17" screen, but the extra size is particularly handy when watching DVDs. However, image quality can't be judged by specifications alone, so our reviews

explain which displays provide a perfect picture and which aren't so suitable for precise image work.

If you intend to play high-octane games or watch movies, you should pay careful attention to the response time of each screen. Measured in milliseconds, this is the time it takes each pixel to change from unlit to lit and back again. Screens that change quickly are better suited to fast-paced games and watching DVDs than those that change slowly. If you plan to play games regularly, look for a screen with a response time of 8ms.

GOOD VIBRATIONS

Building up a music collection on your PC is a great idea, but there's little point if you can't listen to it properly. For music lovers a powerful stereo speaker set is the ideal choice, and Gladiator's Creative T2900 is the best in this group.

Film buffs and gamers should look for a surround-sound set for fully immersive sound. The Aria, Evesham and Mesh systems include these. If you don't want to annoy your neighbours, the headphones included by CCL are a good alternative.

HANDS ON

Regardless of how you use your computer, a good keyboard and mouse are essential. Wireless models help keep your desk looking neat, but it's more important to find a set that's comfortable during prolonged use. Our reviews tell you which are unusually good or bad, and we've rated every set in our table on page 168. The Logitech set included by Gladiator is the best of the bunch.



▲ Speaker systems vary greatly in quality, so see our reviews for details. If you don't want to disturb your family, headphones are a sensible alternative



▲ Although 17" and 19" monitors have the same resolution and therefore display the same amount of information, the size of 19" panels gives games and movies more visual impact



ARIA Arianet A64 3000S

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £799 inc VAT

SUPPLIER Aria 08704 992499

DETAILS www.aria.co.uk

Aria's Arianet A64 3000S is one of the slower PCs in this group, but it has a useful software bundle, good mouse and keyboard and robust speakers.

FEATURES

This is the only system in this test to forgo a midi tower chassis. Instead it comes in a squat but spacious case. Clever engineering makes it easy to get at the components, but there are no free drive bays, and adding a PCI expansion card would require you to remove either the MIDI or S-video and composite outputs. The third PCI slot is filled with a quiet fan.

Aria has included a bright, clean 17" Hyundai monitor. It has integrated speakers, but the far superior Creative Inspire P5900 5.1 surround-sound speakers are also included. The Logitech LX300 keyboard and mouse are comfortable, responsive and a cut above the standard fare included with most PC systems. Software should usually be peripheral to your buying decision, but Microsoft Works Suite 2005 is genuinely useful.

PERFORMANCE

The AMD Athlon 64 3000+ processor used here lags behind most in this group, but Aria has at least fitted 1GB of memory. The PC scored a slightly disappointing 95 in our *Shopper* application benchmarks.

The 128MB GeForce 6600GT graphics card is a good choice at this price, and is capable of running today's games at the native resolution of the Hyundai screen without difficulties. It ran our Doom 3 test at 41.9fps, putting it just 0.4fps behind the fastest gaming PC in the group.

VERDICT

The Arianet A4 3000S isn't fast, so those who want to run very demanding applications should look elsewhere. However, its unusual case makes it worth considering if you want a modern PC without a bulky tower case.

✓ Smart, space-saving case

✗ Not particularly powerful

SPECIFICATIONS AMD Athlon 64 3000+ processor, 1GB RAM, 160GB hard disk, 128MB nVidia GeForce 6600GT graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 17" LCD



CARRERA Vision 6600CS-11

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £799 inc VAT

SUPPLIER Carrera 08718 558855

DETAILS www.carrerassc.co.uk

Carrera's Vision 6600CS-11 comes in a tidy perspex-fronted case and its screen is superb. Unfortunately its performance in 3D applications was a little weak.

FEATURES

The most striking aspect of the Vision 6600CS-11 is its screen. The excellent 19" Samsung SM913N is currently in our Hotlist (see page 30). It's bright and even, displays smooth transitions between colours and shades and produces a pin-sharp image despite being fed an analogue signal. Unfortunately, the supplied Creative SBS260 stereo speakers aren't as good and won't do justice to games, DVDs or music.

The 160GB hard disk is a little smaller than most of the others here. Those planning to build a large photo, video or music collection may have to upgrade sooner rather than later.

PERFORMANCE

Carrera's Vision 6600CS-11 came third in our application benchmarks, scoring 119 overall. Like the two systems above it, the Vision PC uses an AMD Athlon 64 3500+ processor and has 1GB of RAM. All three top performers use the same LG-4163B DVD writer, which gives them an added advantage in the MP3-ripping section of the test.

The graphics card included by Carrera is slightly under par. The GeForce 6600 card is significantly slower than the supercharged 6600GT versions included with several other PCs in this group. A score of 24.3fps in our Doom 3 test shows it lagging behind the competition. Casual gamers won't find this a problem, but those who want to play recent games should look elsewhere.

VERDICT

Carrera's Vision 6600CS-11 is powerful in Windows, and its screen is superb. If you want to play games, though, it's not for you.

✓ Excellent monitor

✗ Poor 3D performance

SPECIFICATIONS AMD Athlon 64 3500+ processor, 1GB RAM, 160GB hard disk, 256MB nVidia GeForce 6600 graphics, DVD+/-RW DL, 19" LCD



CCL FX30-GTVI

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £799 inc VAT

SUPPLIER CCL Computers 01274 471201

DETAILS www.cclonline.com

CCL's FX30-GTVI is by some distance the slowest PC in this group. It has a decent monitor, though, and plenty of extra features.

FEATURES

Like PC Nextday, CCL has included a TV tuner with its PC. The AverMedia DVB-T card comes with a remote control and allows you to watch and record Freeview TV channels. The 19" Belinia monitor is a little dim, but produces a decent image with good contrast and colours. A punchy set of Logitech X-230 2.1 speakers is included, but if your family don't share your taste in music you can slip on the Cyber Acoustic headphones.

A wireless network adaptor is fitted, so you can easily share files or an internet connection with other computers. An NEC two-layer DVD writer and 25 blank DVDs are included, but with no FireWire ports you won't be able to connect a digital camcorder.

PERFORMANCE

With only 512MB of RAM and a relatively underpowered AMD Athlon 64 3000+ processor, it's no surprise that the FX30-GTVI is the slowest system here. It produced the worst result in each of our 2D benchmarks, with a particularly low score of 81 in the *Shopper* benchmarks. It's fast enough for such tasks as web surfing and working on office documents, but if you want to edit video files or work with large digital photos we'd recommend a faster system.

The GeForce 6600GT graphics card is a better choice, though. It's fast enough to take on the latest 3D games with ease, and it helped the system run our Doom 3 benchmark at 42.1fps.

VERDICT

CCL's FX30-GTVI isn't as fast as the other PCs, but it includes useful extras such as a TV card and wireless network adaptor. We'd recommend a more powerful system, though, and TV fans should consider the PC Nextday system.

✓ TV card; wireless networking; decent 3D performance

✗ The slowest PC here in Windows

SPECIFICATIONS AMD Athlon 64 3000+ processor, 512MB RAM, 200GB hard disk, 128MB nVidia GeForce 6600GT graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 19" LCD



EVESHAM Axis 64 GT

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £799 inc VAT

SUPPLIER Evesham 08701 609500

DETAILS www.evesham.com

Evesham's Axis 64 GT is aimed squarely at gamers. It includes a colourful LCD screen, surround-sound speakers and a powerful 3D graphics card.

FEATURES

The ViewSonic VE170b 17" LCD screen included here is great for playing games and watching DVDs. It produces bright, punchy colours and its 8ms refresh rate prevents blurring. It's not as good for editing photos, though, as it has trouble reproducing subtle variations in colours and shades of grey.

Two Sony DVD drives are fitted, so you can easily copy directly from one DVD to another. The Creative Inspire P5800 5.1 surround-sound speaker set is punchy and ideal for gaming, and Evesham includes a great warranty.

PERFORMANCE

Inside the Axis 64 GT is an AMD Athlon 64 3500+ processor. You won't find a faster processor in this group, but some manufacturers have paired the same chip with 1GB of memory rather than the 512MB included by Evesham.

The system produced a decent score of 106 in the *Shopper* application benchmarks. The Axis 64 GT excels at 3D gaming thanks to its 256MB ATI Radeon X800GT graphics card. Although the X800 GT has only eight graphics pipelines compared to the 12 in a standard X800, its core is overlocked to provide a performance boost.

It produced the fastest 3D scores in the group, running Doom 3 at 42.3fps. Gamers will be able to run the latest titles with plenty of speed and detail.

VERDICT

Evesham's Axis 64 GT is a good choice for gamers on a budget, and is fairly fast in Windows as well. Unless you need a highly accurate screen for image editing, it's a decent PC.



Exceptional 3D performance for the price



Screen isn't great for photo editing

SPECIFICATIONS AMD Athlon 64 3500+ processor, 512MB RAM, 200GB hard disk, 256MB ATI Radeon X800GT graphics, DVD +/-RW +/-DL, DVD-ROM, 17" LCD



GLADIATOR Jupiter 6600GT

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £799 inc VAT

SUPPLIER Gladiator 08456 444666

DETAILS www.gladiatorcomputers.com

Gladiator's Jupiter 6600GT is a powerful, well-built PC system that can easily be upgraded.

FEATURES

The Jupiter 6600GT comes in a smart silver-fronted case. Its Logitech keyboard and mouse are particularly impressive. Both are wired, but they're solidly made and comfortable to use. The Creative T2900 stereo speaker system provides good sound quality without the dozens of wires needed by surround-sound sets.

Although the Hyundai LCD has only an analogue input, it produces a sharp image. Its 8ms response time eliminates ghosting, and it produced even colour and greyscale transitions in our tests. This is one of just two PCs in the group without an onsite warranty, though, and we'd prefer a hard disk larger than 160GB.

PERFORMANCE

Like the Watford and Carrera systems, the Jupiter 6600GT uses an Athlon 64 3500+ processor and 1GB of memory. When it arrived the memory modules weren't installed in dual-channel mode, slowing it down slightly. With this error fixed it scored 120 in the *Shopper* benchmarks, leading the nearest competitors by just one point.

Unlike the Watford and Carrera PCs, the Jupiter 6600GT doesn't lack 3D power. Its nVidia GeForce 6600GT graphics card can run games in high detail without any problems, and it sprinted through our Doom 3 test at 41.8fps. As it's built using an SLI motherboard, upgrading to a two-card SLI system in future will be easy.

VERDICT

Despite teething problems with its memory, this is an excellent PC. Its processor, memory and graphics card are as good as any in the group, and it's the only one that can be upgraded to an SLI system. Our only concern is the warranty, so if you can't afford to be without your PC we'd recommend a system with onsite cover.



Powerful; easy SLI upgrade



Basic warranty

SPECIFICATIONS AMD Athlon 64 3500+ processor, 1GB RAM, 160GB hard disk, 128MB nVidia GeForce 6600GT graphics, DVD +/-RW DL, DVD-ROM, 17" LCD



MESH Matrix Eclipse CS Xtra

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £799 inc VAT

SUPPLIER Mesh 08700 464747

DETAILS www.meshcomputers.com

Mesh's Matrix Eclipse CS Xtra has an excellent 17" LCD and is fairly powerful in both Windows and 3D applications.

FEATURES

Most LCD monitors available today produce reasonable images, and most users are unlikely to notice the difference between an average monitor and a good one. If you're interested in photo editing or digital art, though, the ViewSonic VP171b included with Mesh's PC is ideal. It produces accurate colours with smooth transitions and greyscales, can swivel for use in portrait mode and is also ideal for gaming.

Mesh includes a set of Creative Inspire P5800 5.1 surround-sound speakers. This is a good choice for gaming and watching DVDs. The Matrix Eclipse CS Xtra is one of only three PCs in this group to provide two optical drives, which makes disc-to-disc copying of DVDs simple.

PERFORMANCE

The Matrix Eclipse CS Xtra is the only PC here to use an ATI Radeon X800 graphics card. This has four more pixel pipelines than the X800GT used by Evesham but a lower clock speed. Overall, the Mesh performs worse, running Doom 3 at 39.8fps. This is still a good score, though, showing that the Matrix will run all the latest games.

Mesh uses a slightly slower processor than Evesham. Its AMD Athlon 64 3200+ sits in the middle of the group, but it's paired with 1GB of memory. The system scored a reasonable 102 in the *Shopper* application benchmarks.

VERDICT

The Matrix Eclipse CS Xtra is reasonably powerful in Windows and 3D games, and its monitor is superb. With high-quality parts used throughout and a good warranty, it's a well-rounded system and an excellent buy.



Excellent LCD



Slightly slower than average

SPECIFICATIONS AMD Athlon 64 3200+ processor, 1GB RAM, 200GB hard disk, 256MB ATI Radeon X800 graphics, DVD +/-RW +/-DL, 17" LCD





NETHIGHSTREET Net CS 799 Family

RATING ★★

PRICE £799 inc VAT

SUPPLIER NetHighStreet 08700 271339

DETAILS www.nethighstreet.com

NetHighStreet's Net CS 799 Family tries to strike a balance between performance and peripherals, but gets it wrong. The system has very limited 3D power.

FEATURES

NetHighStreet is the only manufacturer to include a multifunction peripheral (MFP) with its computer bundle this month. If you're buying your first computer this could be useful, but the Epson CX3600 isn't our favourite. It produces decent scans, but its printer is sluggish. It scored only two stars in our review in *What's New, Shopper* December 2004.

The 19" Samsung SM913V LCD is one of the best displays in the group. It produces a subtle but colourful image with smooth transitions from light to dark. It has no digital input, but gives a sharp picture from an analogue signal.

The Trust 2.1 speaker set is fine for reproducing the occasional Windows beep or click, but fans of music or games will need to buy a better set.

PERFORMANCE

With its 128MB ATI Radeon X600XT graphics card, the Net CS 799 Family was always going to struggle in our 3D tests. It ran Doom 3 at just 11.3fps, and proved unsuitable for playing recent games.

The Athlon 64 3500+ processor is a better choice, although some manufacturers included twice as much memory as the 512MB provided by NetHighStreet. The system scored 104 in the *Shopper* benchmarks, placing it in the middle of this group.

VERDICT

The Net CS 799 Family is powerful enough for everyday computing, but a big disappointment in games. It's only good value if you don't want to play games and you'll use the MFP regularly.

✓ 19" LCD; multifunction peripheral

✗ Woeful 3D performance

SPECIFICATIONS AMD Athlon 64 3500+ processor, 512MB RAM, 200GB hard disk, 128MB ATI Radeon X600XT graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 19" LCD



PC NEXTDAY Zoostorm 6609

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £799 inc VAT

SUPPLIER sales@pcnextday.co.uk

DETAILS www.pcnextday.co.uk

PC Nextday's Zoostorm 6609 is a well-equipped PC with a large hard disk, TV tuner and 19" LCD monitor.

FEATURES

Many people will be immediately attracted to the Zoostorm 6609's 19" display. Unfortunately, its image quality is unimpressive. Although it produces a sharp image it lacks colour definition and subtlety, and it isn't particularly bright.

The screen contains small stereo speakers, but most people should use the stereo set with a subwoofer included by PC Nextday. This set is constructed using wooden speaker enclosures, and it sounds surprisingly good.

The large monitor is complemented by a TV card tucked neatly inside the PC itself. It allows you to watch and record analogue and Freeview terrestrial channels, and the large 250GB hard disk provides plenty of space for recording your favourite programmes.

PC Nextday's one-year warranty doesn't include onsite support, but it provides collect-and-return cover for the first 30 days.

PERFORMANCE

The Zoostorm provides a good combination of 2D and 3D performance. It uses an AMD Athlon 64 3500+ processor, which is the fastest available in this group, and 1GB of RAM. It scored 103 overall in the *Shopper* benchmarks, which places it around the middle of the group.

Its graphics card, which uses nVidia's mid-range 6600GT chip, is a similarly sensible choice. It's powerful enough to take on the latest 3D games, and ran our Doom 3 benchmark at an impressive 42.2fps.

VERDICT

The Zoostorm 6609 is a decent PC that's ready to take on virtually any Windows task or game. It's the one to buy if you want to use your PC to watch TV.

✓ Large disk; digital TV tuner

✗ Display lacks definition

SPECIFICATIONS AMD Athlon 64 3500+ processor, 1GB RAM, 250GB hard disk, 128MB nVidia GeForce 6600GT graphics, DVD+/-RW DL, 19" LCD



WATFORD Aries Performa 9221

RATING ★★★

PRICE £799 inc VAT

SUPPLIER Watford Electronics 08716 661616

DETAILS www.savastore.com

Despite being one of the fastest PCs here, the Aries Performa 9221 is also one of the quietest thanks to its fanless graphics card.

FEATURES

Watford has included a 17" Sony LCD. It looks smart, but it doesn't produce particularly good images. It has difficulty with definition between very similar colours, and struggles to reproduce highlights and darker areas well at the same time. It has a digital DVI input, though, so you'll always get a pin-sharp picture.

A Creative 2.1 stereo speaker system is included, but it's not as good as the more expensive set that comes with Gladiator's Jupiter 6600GT. It will suffice for most purposes, but music fans will want a better set. A Logitech keyboard and mouse set is included, and there's an onsite warranty.

PERFORMANCE

Like the two other top scorers in our application benchmarks, the Aries Performa 9221 uses an AMD Athlon 64 3500+ processor and 1GB of memory. Its impressive score of 119 overall in the *Shopper* benchmarks also owes much to its DVD drive, which tore through our MP3-ripping tests.

The Watford's ATI Radeon X700 graphics card is far from the best in this group, but it has a clever trick: it's cooled by two large metal heatsinks rather than a fan, so it's silent. As the graphics card fan is usually responsible for a large amount of the noise made by a PC, this makes the Aries far quieter than most other PCs. It ran our Doom 3 benchmark at 22.3fps.

VERDICT

Watford's Aries Performa 9221 is a powerful computer in Windows applications, and while its 3D card is only a modest performer, it is silent. The supplied speakers and monitor are disappointing, however.

✓ Impressive performance in Windows; quiet

✗ Slow graphics card; poor peripherals

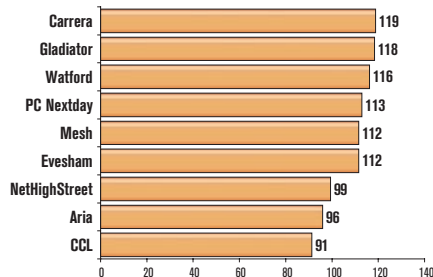
SPECIFICATIONS AMD Athlon 64 3500+ processor, 1GB RAM, 200GB hard disk, 256MB ATI Radeon X700 graphics, DVD+/-RW DL, 17" LCD



BENCHMARKS

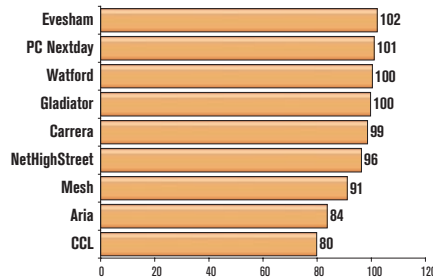
2D Performance **Shopper application tests**

Image-Editing Test



SETTINGS We run our application tests at 1,024x768 resolution and in 32-bit colour
WEB www.computershopper.co.uk

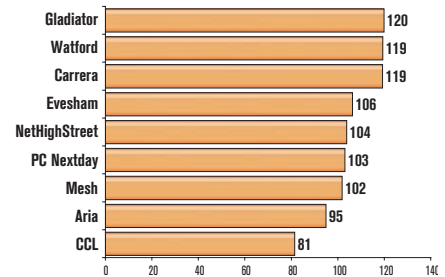
Video-Encoding Test



Computer Shopper's 2D benchmarks are designed to show how PCs stand up to the toughest tasks Windows can throw at them. Today's PCs have no problem running office applications such as Word and Excel, so we chose to focus our tests on areas where you could experience difficulties.

In version 1.0 there are three scripts. Our image-editing test simulates a session of photo enhancement using Paint Shop Pro, culminating with the memory-intensive composition of a

Overall

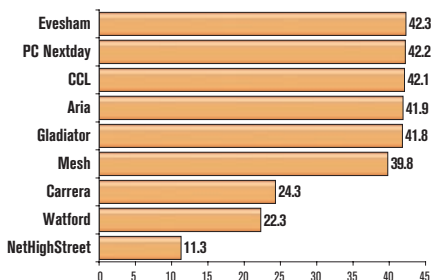


panorama from a set of digital snaps. Encoding a short video to MPEG-2 format is an extremely processor-intensive task, and one that anyone interested in transferring home videos to DVD will have to tackle. Finally, a set of MP3s is generated by ripping an audio CD.

We compiled the tests with the help of our sister magazine for performance computing, *Custom PC*. Figures are relative to a reference Evesham Athlon 64 3500+ system, which scores 100 in all tests.

3D Performance **Doom 3/3DMark03**

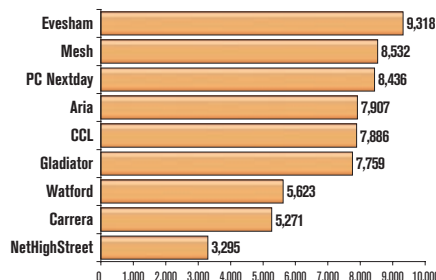
Doom 3 (fps)



SETTINGS 1,024x768 resolution, high quality, 4x AA
WEB www.doom3.com

We run a timed demo in Doom 3 to test whether a PC has the power needed to play cutting-edge 3D games with ease. A good score here means that it should cope with any graphically intense 3D game.

3DMark03

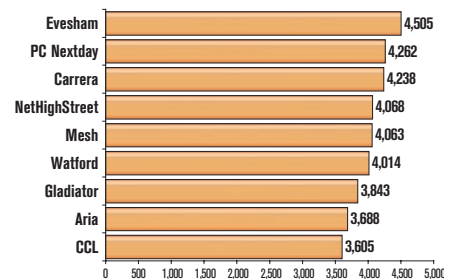


SETTINGS 1,024x768 resolution, 32-bit colour, default settings
WEB www.futuremark.com

3DMark03 is Futuremark's 3D benchmark. It comprises four game tests from four different genres. The workload is representative of games coming on to the market now.

PCMark04

PCMark04



SETTINGS 1,024x768 resolution, 32-bit colour, default settings
WEB www.futuremark.com

As well as our own benchmarks, we test all desktop and notebook PCs using Futuremark's PCMark04. You can download a free version of this benchmark from www.futuremark.com/download.

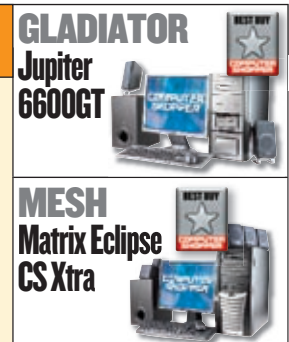
LABS VERDICT **£799 SUPERSYSTEMS**

This month's Labs test was even more hotly contested than usual. The manufacturers pushed their £799 budget to the limit, supplying better PCs than we've ever seen before at this price. We were particularly impressed by the computers supplied by Evesham, Gladiator, Mesh and PC Nextday.

Evesham's Axis 64 GT is a great gaming system for this price. It has an excellent graphics card and is fast in Windows applications as well as games. PC Nextday's Zoostorm 6609 is a little slower in Windows, but its large screen, huge hard disk

and TV card make it ideal if you want to watch TV and record programmes on your computer.

Gladiator's Jupiter 6600GT has a winning combination of a fast processor, plenty of memory and a powerful graphics card. It has quality peripherals, and wins a Best Buy award despite its limited warranty. Mesh's Matrix Eclipse CS Xtra is less powerful, but comes with a bigger disk and a superb LCD that's ideal for photo editing. With an onsite warranty included, it also wins a Best Buy award. **CS**





MANUFACTURER	ARIA	CARRERA	CCL	EVESHAM	
Model	Arianet A64 3000S	Vision 6600CS-11	FX30-GTVI	Axis 64 GT	
Rating	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★	
Processor	AMD Athlon 64 3000+	AMD Athlon 64 3500+	AMD Athlon 64 3000+	AMD Athlon 64 3500+	
Processor speed	1.8GHz	2.2GHz	1.8GHz	2.2GHz	
Processor socket	Socket 939	Socket 939	Socket 939	Socket 939	
Level 1 cache	128KB	128KB	128KB	128KB	
Level 2 cache	512KB	512KB	128KB	512KB	
Memory installed	1GB	1GB	512MB	512MB	
Memory type	PC3200	PC3200	PC3200	PC3200	
Maximum memory	4GB	4GB	4GB	4GB	
Motherboard	EQS M56K9-MLF	ECS NForce 4-A939	Biostar NF4ST-A9	MSI K8N Neo4	
Motherboard chipset	ATI Xpress 200	nVidia nForce 4	nVidia nForce 4	nVidia nForce 4	
Memory bus speed	200MHz	200MHz	200MHz	200MHz	
BIOS type	Phoenix	Phoenix	Phoenix	Phoenix	
PORTS					
USB2 ports (front/rear)	2/4	2/4	2/4	2/4	
FireWire ports (front/rear)	1/1	1/0	0/0	1/0	
Networking	10/100	10/100/1,000	10/100/1,000	10/100/1,000	
Legacy ports	Parallel, 2x PS/2, serial	Parallel, 2x PS/2, serial	Parallel, 2x PS/2, serial	Parallel, 2x PS/2, serial	
INTERNAL EXPANSION					
Case	Micro ATX cube	Midi tower	Midi tower	Midi tower	
Case size HxWxD	201x267x300mm	440x200x480mm	440x200x431mm	433x196x498mm	
PCI (free)	3 (0)	3 (3)	3 (0)	4 (3)	
PCI-E x1 (free)	1 (0)	2 (2)	2 (2)	2 (2)	
PCI-E x16 (free)	1 (0)	1 (0)	1 (0)	1 (0)	
AGP (free)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (limited compatibility, unused)	0 (0)	
Serial ATA (free)	4 (3)	4 (3)	4 (3)	4 (3)	
Memory (free)	4 (2)	4 (2)	4 (3)	4 (2)	
Drive bays 3½" (free)	1 (0)	7 (5)	3 (1)	4 (3)	
Drive bays 5¼" (free)	1 (0)	4 (3)	4 (3)	4 (2)	
HARD DISK					
Model	Maxtor DiamondMax 10 (6L160M0)	Maxtor DiamondMax 10 (6B160M0)	Maxtor DiamondMax 10 (6B200M0)	Western Digital Caviar WD2000JD (WD2000JD-00HBC0)	
Interface	SATA 150	SATA 150	SATA 150	SATA 150	
Capacity	160GB	160GB	200GB	200GB	
Spin speed	7,200rpm	7,200rpm	7,200rpm	7,200rpm	
GRAPHICS					
Technology	PCI Express	PCI Express	PCI Express	PCI Express	
Graphics card	MSI 6600GT	MSI NX6600	Inno3D GeForce 6600GT	Connect3D X800 GT	
Graphics chipset	nVidia GeForce 6600GT	nVidia GeForce 6600	nVidia GeForce 6600GT	ATI Radeon X800GT	
Graphics memory	128MB	256MB	128MB	256MB	
Graphics/video ports	D-sub, DVI, S-video out, component out, composite out	D-sub, DVI, S-video out, composite out	D-sub, DVI, S-video	D-sub, DVI, S-video out, composite out, component out	
SOUND					
Sound card	Realtek ALC655	Realtek ALC655	Realtek AC850	Realtek AC850	
Sound card outputs	5.1 line out, coaxial S/PDIF out	5.1 line out, coaxial S/PDIF out	7.1 line out	7.1 line out, optical/coaxial S/PDIF out	
Speakers	Creative Inspire T5900 5.1	Creative SBS 260 2.0	Logitech X-Z30 2.1	Creative Inspire P5800 5.1	
REMOVABLE DRIVES					
Floppy drive 3½"	No	Yes	Yes	No	
Card reader	CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick, Smart Media, MicroDrive	CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick, Smart Media, MicroDrive	CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick, Smart Media, MicroDrive	No	
Optical drive(s)	NEC ND3540A (16X DVD+R, 16X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+R DL, 6X DVD-R DL, 48X CD-R, 32X CD-RW, 16X DVD-ROM, 48X CD-ROM)	LG GSA-4163B (16X DVD+R, 16X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 5X DVD-RAM, 40X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 16X DVD-ROM, 40X CD-ROM)	NEC ND3540A (16X DVD+R, 16X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+R DL, 6X DVD-R DL, 48X CD-R, 32X CD-RW, 16X DVD-ROM, 48X CD-ROM)	Sony DW-Q28A (16X DVD+R, 16X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 8X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL, 48X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 16X DVD-ROM, 48X CD-ROM), Sony DDU 1615 (16X DVD-ROM, 48X CD-ROM)	
DISPLAY					
Size and technology	17" LCD	19" LCD	19" LCD	17" LCD	
Model	Hyundai L72D	Samsung 913N	Belinia 101902	ViewSonic VE710b	
Pixel response time	8ms	8ms	16ms	8ms	
Inputs	DVI, D-sub	D-sub	D-sub	D-sub (captive)	
OTHER HARDWARE					
Modem	No	No	PCI 56K	No	
Keyboard	Logitech LX300	Logitech Cordless Internet Pro keyboard	Logitech Cordless Internet Pro keyboard	Microsoft Basic Keyboard 1.0A	
Mouse	Logitech LX300	Logitech cordless optical mouse	Logitech cordless optical mouse	Microsoft Basic Optical Mouse 1.0A	
Keyboard/mouse rating	★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★	
Extras	N/A	N/A	Cyber Acoustic AC634 2.0 headphones, AverMedia DVB-T 771 PCI TV card, 25 DVD-R disks, InexQ CR054g Wireless LAN adaptor	N/A	
SOFTWARE					
Software included	Microsoft Works Suite 2005	Microsoft Works 8, Panda Titanium Antivirus 2004, Roxio Easy CD Creator Suite 7, CyberLink Power2Go 5	Microsoft Works 8, BullGuard AntiVirus 5.02, InterVideo WinDVD 5, WinDVD Creator 2, Colin McRae Rally 04	Microsoft Works 8, Roxio Easy Media Creator Basic DVD 7, Sonic Cineplayer 2.01, Bullguard AntiVirus/Firewall 5	
Operating system	Windows XP Media Center Edition	Windows XP Home Edition	Windows XP Home Edition	Windows XP Home Edition	
Operating system restore option	Windows CD	Restore CD	Windows CD	Restore CD	
BUYING INFORMATION					
Parts warranty	One year onsite	One year onsite	One year onsite, two years RTB	One year onsite, two years RTB	
Labour warranty	One year onsite	One year onsite, five years RTB	One year onsite, two years RTB	One year onsite, two years RTB	
Tech support times	9am-5pm Mon-Fri	9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat	9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat	9am-5.30pm Mon-Sat	
Company founded	1995	1972	1995	1983	
Tech support staff	8	20	10	83	
Employees	60	130	100	419	
Price including delivery and VAT	£799	£799	£799	£799	
Price including delivery excluding VAT	£680	£680	£680	£680	
Contact	Aria PC Technology	Carrera	CCL Computers	Evesham	
Phone	08704 992499	08718 558855	01274 471201	08701 609500	
Web	www.aria.co.uk	www.carrerasc.co.uk	www.cclonline.com	www.evesham.com	



GLADIATOR	MESH	NETHIGHSTREET	PC NEXTDAY	WATFORD
Jupiter 6600GT	Matrix Eclipse CS Xtra	Net CS 799 Family	Zoostorm 6609	Aries Performa 9221
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★
AMD Athlon 64 3500+	AMD Athlon 64 3200+	AMD Athlon 64 3500+	AMD Athlon 64 3500+	AMD Athlon 64 3500+
2.2GHz	2.0GHz	2.2GHz	2.2GHz	2.2GHz
Socket 939	Socket 939	Socket 939	Socket 939	Socket 939
128KB	128KB	128KB	128KB	128KB
512KB	512KB	512KB	512KB	512KB
1GB	1GB	512MB	1GB	1GB
PC3200	PC3200	PC3200	PC3200	PC3200
4GB	4GB	4GB	4GB	4GB
Asus A8N-SLI	Asus A8N-SLI Deluxe	MSI K8N Neo4	ECS NForce4-A939	ECS NForce4-A939
nVidia nForce 4 SLI	nVidia nForce 4 SLI	nVidia nForce 4	nVidia nForce 4	nVidia nForce 4
200GHz	200GHz	200MHz	200MHz	200MHz
Phoenix	Phoenix	Phoenix	Phoenix	Phoenix
2/4	2/6	2/4	3/4	2/4
0/1	0/2	0/0	0/3	1/0
10/100/1,000	10/100/1,000	10/100/1,000	10/100/1,000	10/100/1,000
Parallel, 2x PS/2, serial, midi	Parallel, 2x PS/2	Parallel, 2x PS/2, serial	Parallel, 2x PS/2, serial	Parallel, 2x PS/2, serial
Midi tower	Midi tower	Midi tower	Midi tower	Midi tower
410x195x481mm	475x205x455mm	425x180x488mm	427x215x450mm	431x200x460mm
3 (3)	3 (1)	4 (3)	3 (0)	3 (3)
2 (1)	2 (2)	2 (2)	2 (2)	2 (2)
2 (1)	2 (1)	1 (0)	1 (0)	1 (0)
0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
4 (3)	8 (7)	4 (3)	4 (3)	4 (3)
4 (2)	4 (2)	4 (3)	4 (2)	4 (2)
7 (5)	4 (2)	6 (4)	4 (1)	5 (3)
4 (2)	3 (1)	4 (3)	3 (2)	5 (4)
Hitachi Deskstar 7K250	Maxtor DiamondMax 10 (6L200M0)	Maxtor DiamondMax 10 (6B200M0)	Hitachi DeskStar (HDS722525VLSA80)	Maxtor DiamondMax 10 (6B200M0)
SATA 150	SATA 150	SATA 150	SATA 150	SATA 150
160GB	200GB	200GB	250GB	200GB
7,200rpm	7,200rpm	7,200rpm	7,200rpm	7,200rpm
PCI Express	PCI Express	PCI Express	PCI Express	PCI Express
Gigabyte GVNX66T128D	Connect3D X800	PowerColor X600XT PCI	Inno3D GeForce 6600GT	PowerColor X700 Bravo
nVidia GeForce 6600GT	ATI Radeon X800	ATI Radeon X600	nVidia GeForce 6600GT	ATI Radeon X700
128MB	256MB	128MB	128MB	256MB
D-sub, DVI, S-video	D-sub, DVI, S-video out, composite out	D-sub, DVI, S-video	D-sub, DVI, S-video	D-sub, DVI, S-video out, component out
Realtek AC850	Realtek AC850	Realtek AC850	Realtek ALC655	Realtek ALC655
7.1 line out, optical/coaxial S/PDIF out	7.1 line out, optical/coaxial S/PDIF out	7.1 line out, optical/coaxial S/PDIF out	5.1 line out, coaxial S/PDIF out	5.1 line out
Creative T9900 2.1	Creative Inspire P5800 5.1	Trust SP-3300M 2.1	Zoostorm 2.1	Creative SBS 350 2.1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick, Smart Media, MicroDrive	No	CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick, Smart Media, MicroDrive	CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick, Smart Media, MicroDrive	No
LG GSA-4163B (16X DVD+R, 16X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 5X DVD-RAM, 40X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 16X DVD-ROM, 40X CD-ROM), Aopen 1648/AAAP Pro (16X DVD-ROM, 48X CD-ROM)	Sony DW-Q28A (16X DVD+R, 16X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 8X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL, 48X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 16X DVD-ROM, 48X CD-ROM), Sony DDU 1615 (16X DVD-ROM, 48X CD-ROM)	NEC ND3540A (16X DVD+R, 16X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+R DL, 6X DVD-R DL, 48X CD-R, 32X CD-RW, 16X DVD-ROM, 48X CD-ROM)	Philips PBDV1640P (16X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 4X DVD+RW, 4X DVD-RW, 2.4X DVD+R DL, 40X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 16X DVD-ROM, 40X CD-ROM)	LG GSA-4163B (16X DVD+R, 16X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 5X DVD-RAM, 40X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 16X DVD-ROM, 40X CD-ROM)
17" LCD	17" LCD	19" LCD	19" LCD	17" LCD
Hyundai B70A	ViewSonic VP171b	Samsung SM913V	AOC LM925	Sony SDM-S74EB
8ms	8ms	12ms	16ms	16ms
D-sub	DVI, 2x D-sub	D-sub	D-sub	DVI D-sub
No	PCI 56K	No	No	No
Logitech UltraX keyboard	Logitech Internet Pro keyboard	Microsoft Digital Media Keyboard 1.0A	Microsoft Wireless Comfort Keyboard 1.0A	Logitech Cordless Internet Pro keyboard
Logitech MX310	Logitech Optical mouse	Microsoft Wheel Mouse Optical 1.1A	Microsoft Wireless Optical Mouse 2.0A	Logitech cordless optical mouse
★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
N/A	N/A	Epson CX3600	TwinHan dual digital analogue TV tuner	N/A
Microsoft Works 7, Nero 6 Suite, CyberLink PowerDVD 5	Microsoft Works 8, CyberLink PowerDVD 6, PowerProducer 3, PowerDirector 3, PowerBackup 1.1, PowerCinema 4	OpenOffice 1.1, Norton Internet Security 2005, Nero OEM, CyberLink PowerDVD 5	E-Trust EZ Antivirus 2005, Nero 6, CyberLink PowerDVD 5	Microsoft Works 8, Panda Titanium Antivirus 2004, Roxio Easy CD Creator Suite 7, CyberLink PowerDVD 5
Windows XP Home Edition	Windows XP Home Edition	Windows XP Home Edition	Windows XP Home Edition	Windows XP Home Edition
Windows CD	Restore CD	Restore CD	Windows CD	Restore CD
One year RTB	One year onsite, two years RTB	Two years RTB	One year RTB, first 30 days C&R, Monitor three years onsite, printer one year onsite	One year onsite
One year RTB	One year on site, two years RTB	Three years RTB	One year RTB, first 30 days C&R	One year onsite, five years RTB
10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat	9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri	11am-5pm Mon-Fri	9am-6pm Mon-Fri	9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat
1999	1987	2000	1993	1972
9	42	Not disclosed	3	20
15	275	Not disclosed	68	130
£799	£799	£799	£799	£799
£680	£680	£680	£680	£680
Gladiator Computers	Mesh Computers	Net-HighStreet	PC Nextday	Watford Electronics
08456 444666	08700 464747	08700 271339	sales@pcnextday.co.uk	08716 661616
www.gladiatorcomputers.com	www.meshcomputers.com	www.nethighstreet.com	www.pcnextday.co.uk	www.savastore.com